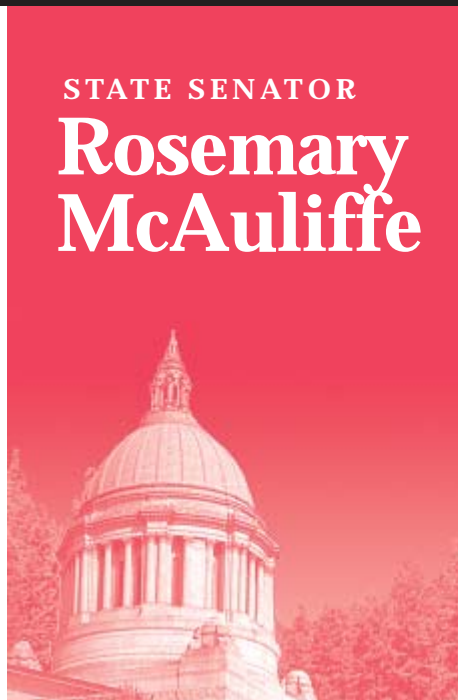


Dear friends and neighbors,

The 2004 legislative session was just 60 days long, yet packed with important decisions. The federal courts declared the state's 70-year-old blanket primary unconstitutional, forcing the Legislature to select a replacement primary system. In addition, we passed a supplemental budget that avoids some of the painful hits to health care and human services proposed earlier in the session. I'm particularly pleased that the state's home health care workers will receive 50-cent per-hour raises and health benefits.

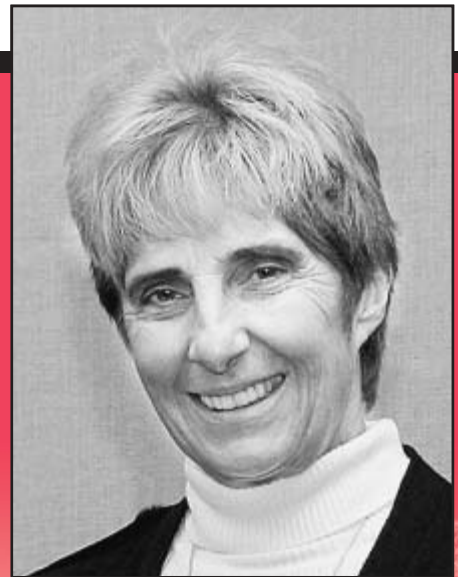
I continue to serve as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Education Committee. While we achieved some gains for public school students this session, it is disappointing that once again the Legislature failed to devote the needed dollars to our state's public education system. It is the paramount duty of the state to educate our children, and I supported several bills that would have helped achieve that. I pushed for a cost-of-living adjustment for our school employees, and additional funding of programs that provide academic boosts to struggling students as supported by the people through Initiatives 728 and 732.

The Legislature passed tax breaks this session designed to foster a competitive state economy. I support the use of targeted tax breaks as a means to economic



STATE SENATOR

**Rosemary McAuliffe**



## 2004 Legislative Report

development, so long as these incentives have built-in, stringent accountability standards. Tax breaks without accountability are nothing more than loopholes at the taxpayers' expense.

I appreciate everyone in the 1st District who calls or writes during session. Input on your views and concerns is very valuable to me as I work to represent the issues most important to you and to our community. Please continue to contact me at 360-786-7600 or 800-562-6000 regarding issues that are important to you.

Sincerely,

Rosemary McAuliffe

**Please stay  
in touch!**

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## Education Package Offers Mixed Results

**W**e cannot afford to shortchange education at a time when we ask our students to meet higher academic standards in preparation for competing in the demanding, highly skilled 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

The session offered some particularly bright spots for education. After much discussion and compromise, we were able to reform the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, or WASL, which students beginning with the class of 2008 must pass to graduate. A measure that passed this session allows students up to four opportunities to retake the test. Further, students now may use an alternative assessment to prove their proficiency. And special education students for whom the WASL is inappropriate, even with accommodations, may complete other measures included in the students' individualized education plan and earn a "certificate of individual achievement."

These are critical safeguards that acknowledge not all students learn the same, but all students deserve a fair chance to succeed.

In addition, I'm pleased that because of the 2004 session, the Learning Assistance Program program was changed to drive dollars to the neediest students, and school districts are able to collect levy dollars approved by their voters.

On the other hand, several important initiatives fell prey to a tight schedule and an even tighter supplemental budget, less than 5 percent of which was dedicated to K-12 education. I worked to get \$500,000 for a comprehensive K-12 finance study that would set in place the foundation for adequate and equitable funding for K-12 education. Unfortunately, \$600,000



was allocated for charter schools and we lost the opportunity for a K-12 finance study.

I also pressed for a change in the state's supermajority law to allow for a simple 50 percent passage rate for local school district levies. This measure passed the House this year but died in the Senate.

Unfortunately, in a year when the Legislature did not find the time or money to implement these

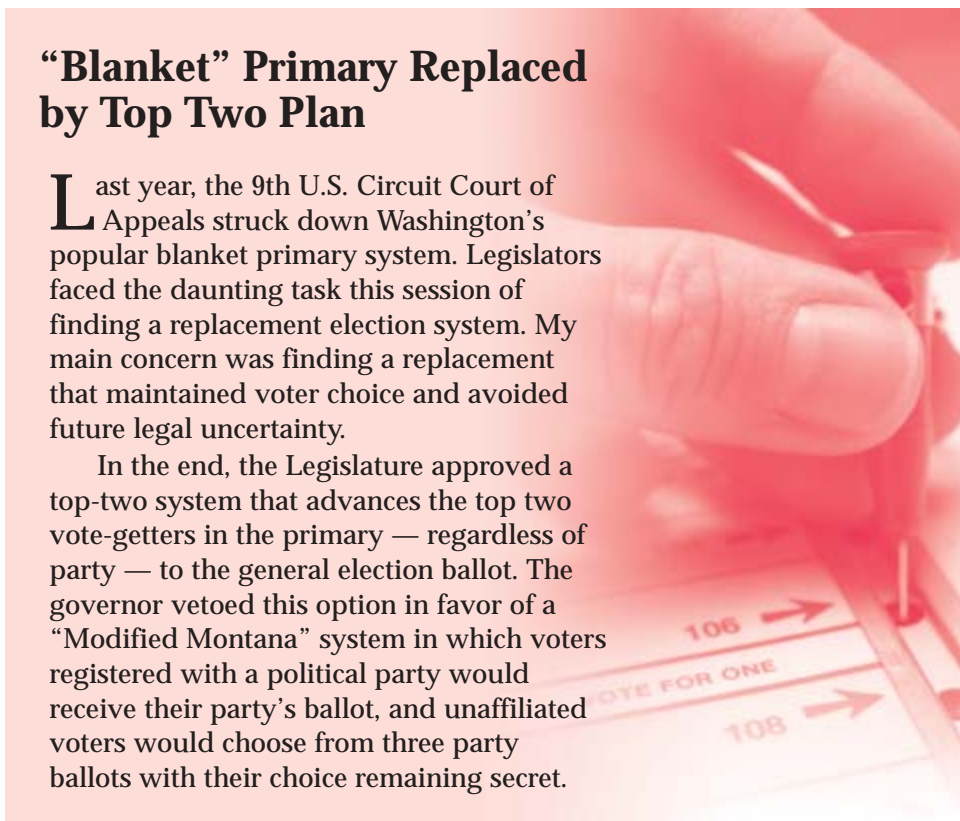
***We cannot afford to shortchange education at a time when we ask our students to meet higher academic standards***

common-sense measures, considerable energy was spent passing a bill that will establish Washington's first charter schools. The energy spent on authorizing charter schools in the last few years should have been directed to funding our public schools. Last year, we made big cuts to the education budget. We reduced or suspended funding for two voter-approved measures that lower class size and provide school employees with a cost-of-living adjustment. We should focus our resources on these things that we know will help every child succeed.

## "Blanket" Primary Replaced by Top Two Plan

**L**ast year, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals struck down Washington's popular blanket primary system. Legislators faced the daunting task this session of finding a replacement election system. My main concern was finding a replacement that maintained voter choice and avoided future legal uncertainty.

In the end, the Legislature approved a top-two system that advances the top two vote-getters in the primary — regardless of party — to the general election ballot. The governor vetoed this option in favor of a "Modified Montana" system in which voters registered with a political party would receive their party's ballot, and unaffiliated voters would choose from three party ballots with their choice remaining secret.



## Capital Budget Improves UW-Bothell, Cascadia Access

I was successful in securing \$3.5 million in the capital budget for completion of an off-ramp to the University of Washington-Bothell/Cascadia Community College dual campus. The money will be used to design a second road and access ramp on the south side of the campus off state Highway 522.

Securing funding for this project was a key victory for the schools, which need the ramp to raise their current combined 3,000-student limit. This is a big step for the campus and for our community. UW-Bothell and Cascadia provide two quality education programs to

north King County and south Snohomish. At a time when unprecedented numbers of students are

lining up to enroll in our state's public colleges and universities, we should do everything we can to enhance enrollment.

Some uneasiness arose among the UW-Bothell/Cascadia community this session when an idea came forth to merge the two schools into one four-year institution. While I fully support the idea of expanding enrollment opportunities in Washington, I believe that these two schools each serve critical functions in our community. Changing the missions of these excellent institutions should



not happen without much thought and community input. I sponsored legislation that would support a statewide survey of existing higher education options so that we can fully understand which regions truly need new or expanded academic programs.

## Snohomish Students Learn About Legislative Process

I had the pleasure this session of meeting a group of Snohomish High School students spearheading a legislative effort to protect students' rights to carry cell phones in school. After hearing their persuasive arguments, I sponsored a bill that would allow school districts to limit, but not prohibit, cell phone possession on school grounds and during school events. The students told me that cell phones are often their only means of communicating with parents during the school day, and argued that such devices could become a critical lifeline in the event of an emergency.

The Senate approved the bill, but it did not pass out of the House. Still, this was a valuable learning experience for the students on the inner workings of the Legislature. I was thoroughly impressed with their hard work and determination.

I worked on several additional school safety initiatives this session, including:



Sen. McAuliffe talks with Barbara Johnshoy and Mary Douglas who testified in favor of her cell-phone bill.

- Securing \$25,000 in the supplemental budget to go to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's school safety center advisory committee to identify effective child abduction instructional materials. This money will give families and educators access to instructional materials that help children learn effective ways to protect themselves from abduction.
- Sponsoring a measure to require seat belts on public school buses. Security cameras installed on buses around the nation have yielded alarming images of students being hurled around the vehicle during

crashes. The measure did not pass the Senate, but I will work with stakeholders during the interim to determine reasonable, cost-effective ways to keep our students safe while being transported to school.

## Health Care

Access to affordable health care is critical to our children, families and small businesses.

This session, we restored health care for the poorest children. In addition, on the last day of session, the Legislature passed a measure that would allow insurance companies to offer a less comprehensive package of benefits for small employers (50 or fewer employees). We were able to protect patients' rights to see alternative providers (naturopaths, chiropractors and massage therapists). This is a major first step toward affordable health care.



## Protecting Washington Employees, Citizens from Secondhand Smoke

Once again, this session I worked to protect Washington families and workers from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Unfortunately, measures to prohibit smoking in all indoor places where the public is present, such as restaurants and skating rinks, did not gain traction in the Legislature. Such legislation would protect both patrons and employees.

Statewide polling has shown that 72 percent of the people support banning smoking in public places.

Two proposed initiatives could appear on the November ballot: one to ban smoking in all indoor public places, and another to ban indoor smoking in public places where children are allowed.

## Town Hall Meetings

**Thursday, May 13 • 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
**Cathcart Elementary School Library**  
**8201 188th Ave., SE • Snohomish**

*Driving Directions:*

*Take Highway 9 to 188th Street (Clearview).*

*Turn east onto 188th Street, and continue one mile.*

*Cathcart Elementary School is on the left.*

**Thursday, May 20 • 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
**Bothell Police Department, Community Room**  
**18410 101st Ave., NE • Bothell**

Please RSVP by calling 425-481-7459, e-mailing [mcauliff\\_ro@leg.wa.gov](mailto:mcauliff_ro@leg.wa.gov) or just drop by.



## MANY THANKS TO OUR 2004 LEGISLATIVE PAGES



Shayla Behling



Peter Fitzpatrick



Benjamin Graves



Andrew Rose



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L E G I S L A T I V E R E P O R T

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